

Leveraging Collaborative Capacity and Strategic Clarity for results: A community-of-practice approach

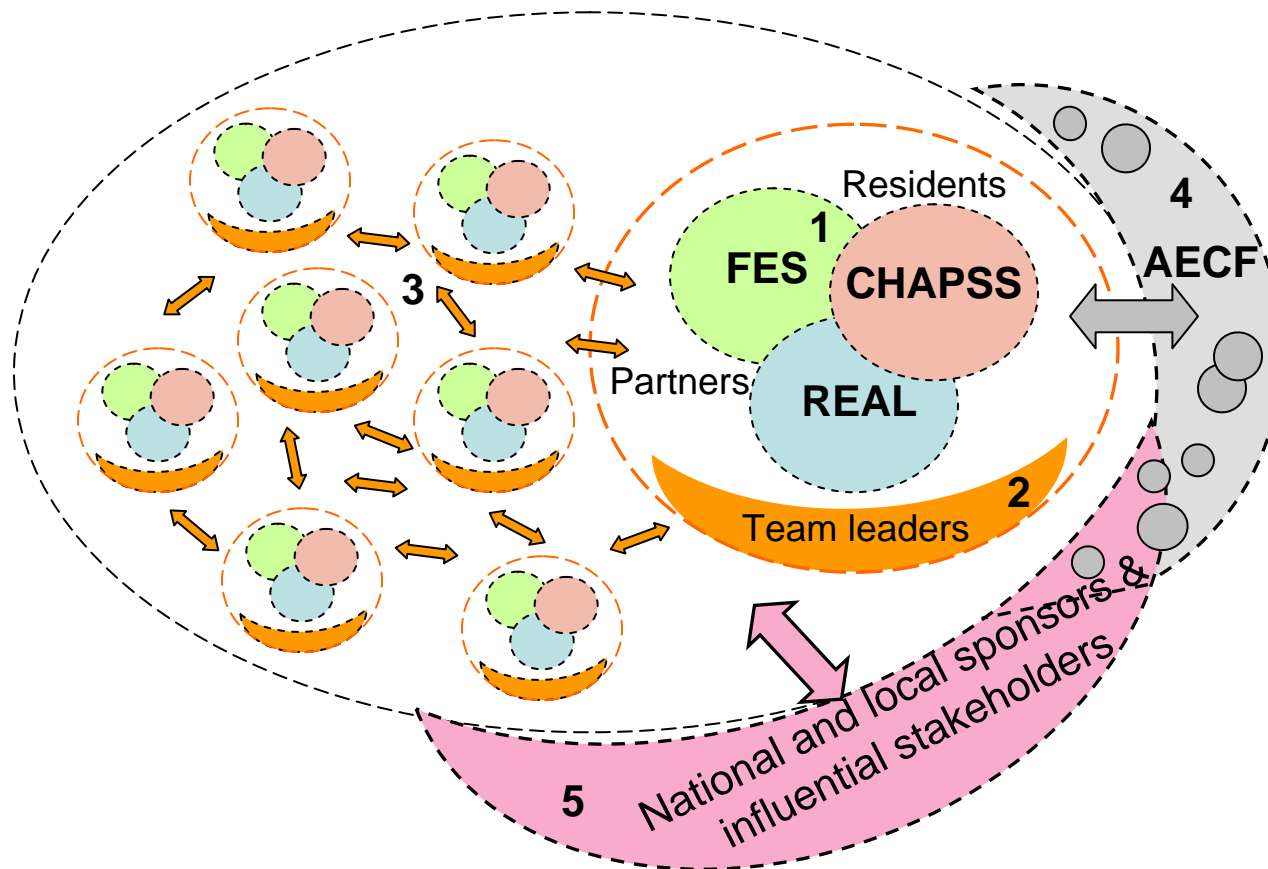
Figures 1-13, which appear in the BODY OF REPORT

Prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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Communities of practice at multiple levels to promote development of CCxSC capabilities in various contexts



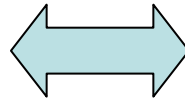
Five levels of community:

1. Results Team/CoP (FES, CHAPSS, REAL)
2. Site-level coordinators for results teams/CoPs
3. Cross-site community on “content” (CHAPSS, FES) and “process” (strategy, collaboration)
4. AECF “internal” staff from various departments and programs (headquarters and field)
5. “External” CCxSC community of researchers, program leaders, policy makers, and others (including AECF)

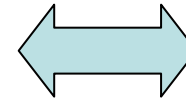
•At each level, to what extent are we collaborating today to build CCxSC capabilities for better results?

The CCxSC Theory of Change: Collaborative Capacity combined with Strategic Clarity gets sustained results

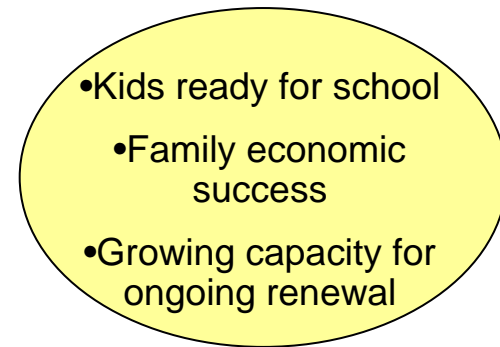
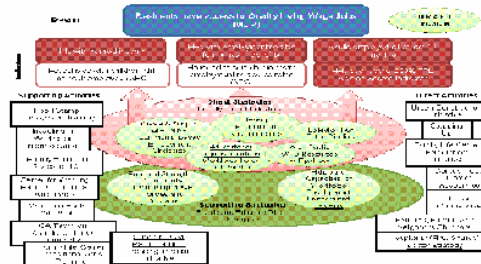
Collaborative Capacity
for connecting and
learning



Strategic Clarity for defining
goals, making plans and
implementing solutions



Getting
Results

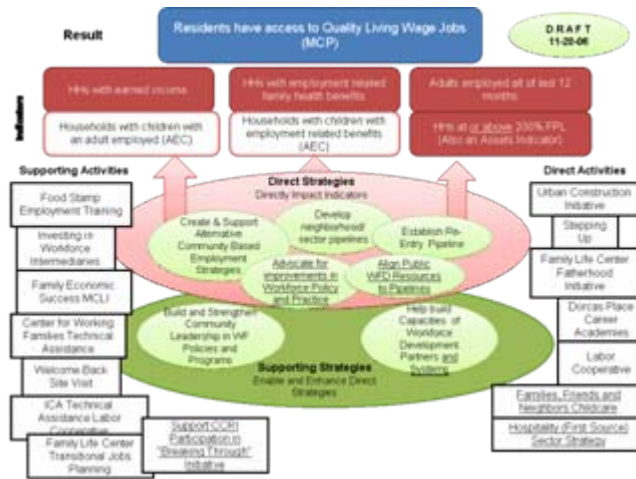
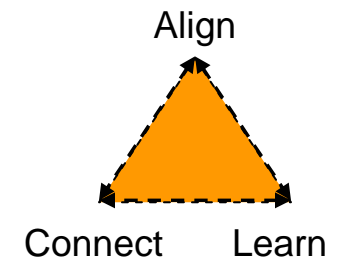


- Civic communities of practice provide social structures for connecting and learning

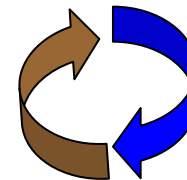
- Local residents and partners are best judge of “what works here”
- They define strategies, implement initiatives, and own accountability for results



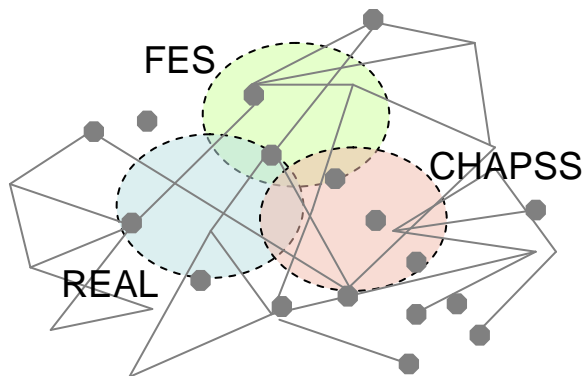
Getting results by “leading with ideas” ... and by “making connections”



- *Strategic Clarity* defines outcomes, indicators, strategies, activities, and accountabilities; the “What”



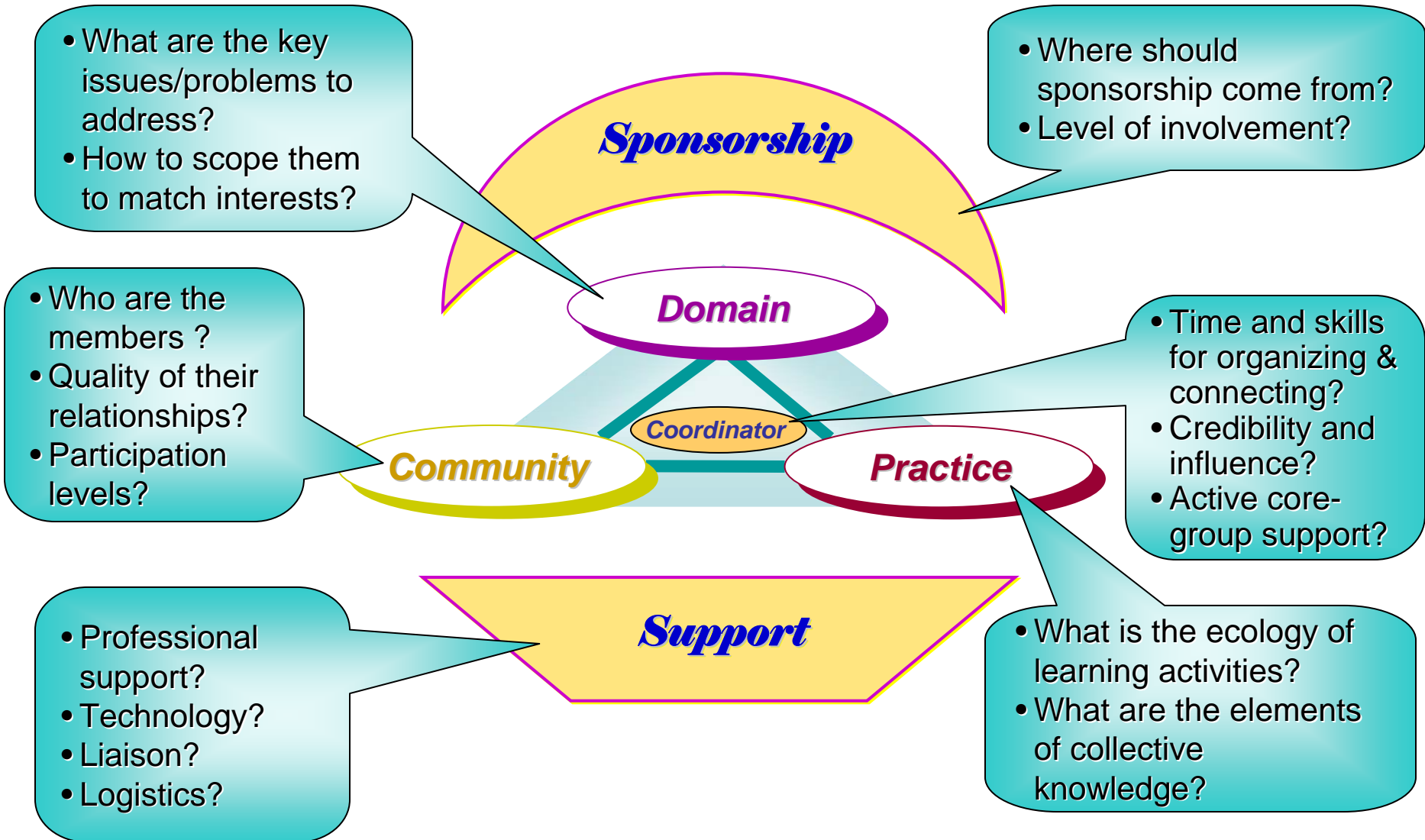
Collaborative Capacity is the goose that lays the golden eggs



- *Collaborative Capacity* of diverse players working and learning together engages the “Who” and provides the “How”

Communities of practice: Conceptual framework

Communities of practice are groups of people who learn together over time as they work in areas of shared passion or concern.



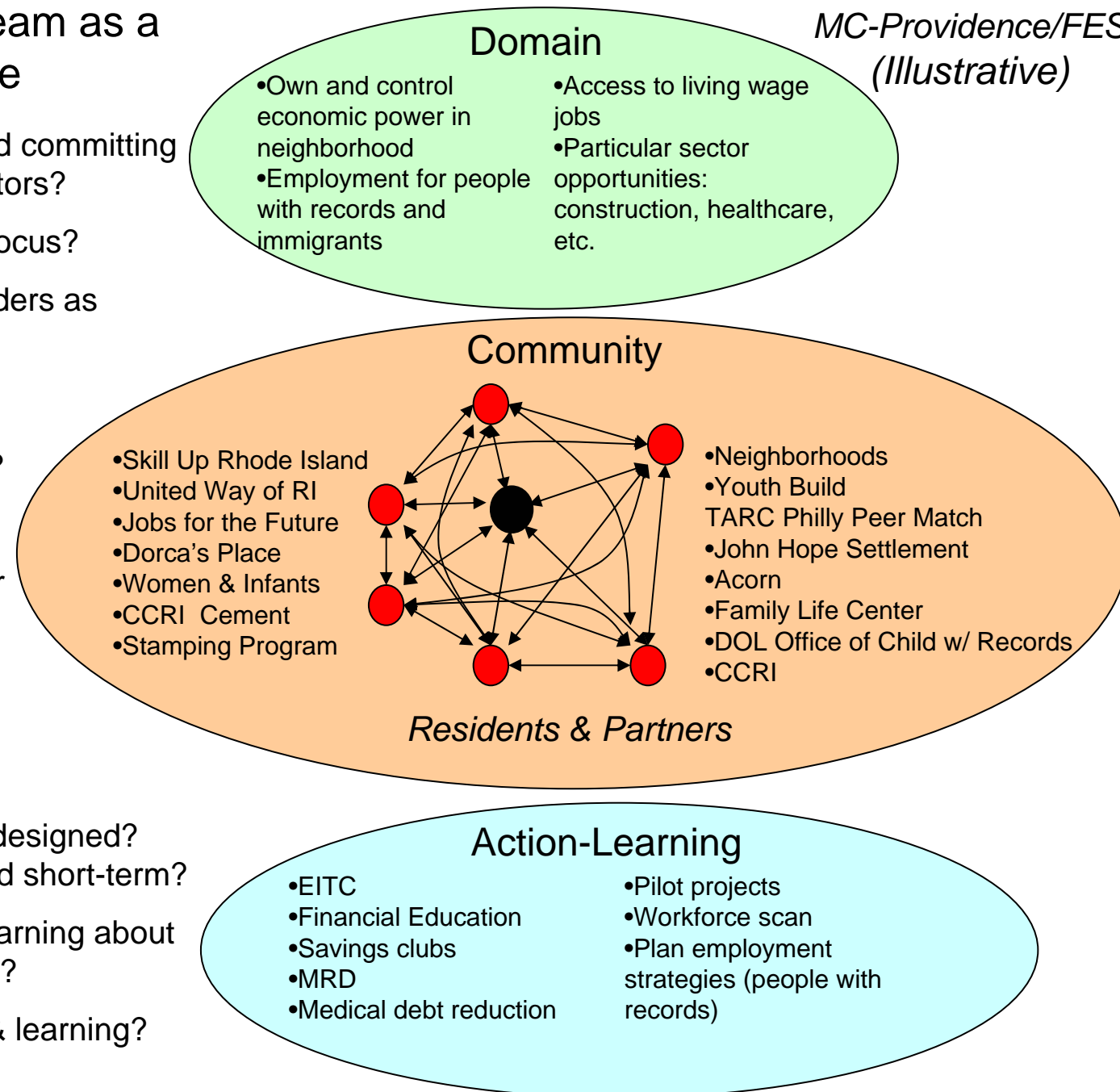
*MC-Providence/FES
(Illustrative)*

“Case clinic” questions for analyzing a results team as a community of practice

- Collectively defining and committing to key issues and indicators?
- Levels of passion and focus?
- Clear value to stakeholders as well as participants?

- Right players involved?
- Trust and reciprocity?
- Collective ownership or balkanized, competing partnerships?

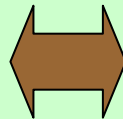
- How are activities designed?
Portfolio of long- and short-term?
- How are players learning about issues & each other?
- Integrating action & learning?



The CCxSC logic model in action: Connecting and learning drive strategies that get results

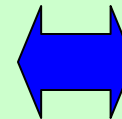
Connect, Learn & Innovate

- Resident's child is struggling in first grade
- Leadership training spurs ideas and her motivation to act; meets peers and partners
- At cross-site exchange learns about play-and learn program
- Organizing network of play-and-learn parents; recruits sponsor
- Connecting with people in other neighborhoods



Strategize, implement and scale initiatives

- Defines the need and writes initial action plan to help kids succeed
- Organizes initiative with help from partners and MC-Providence
- Implements pilot
- Planning ways to scale to other neighborhoods

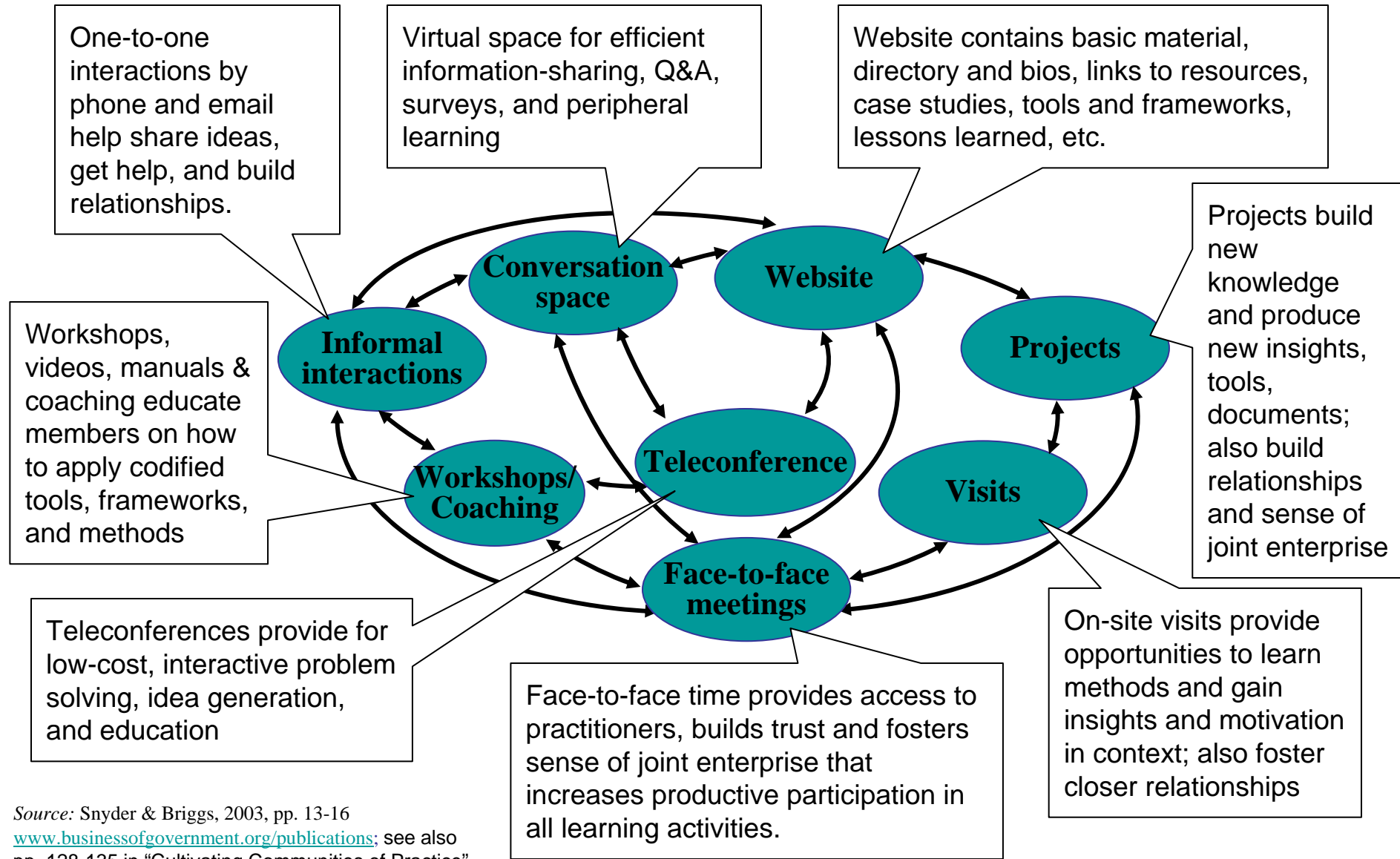


Get results

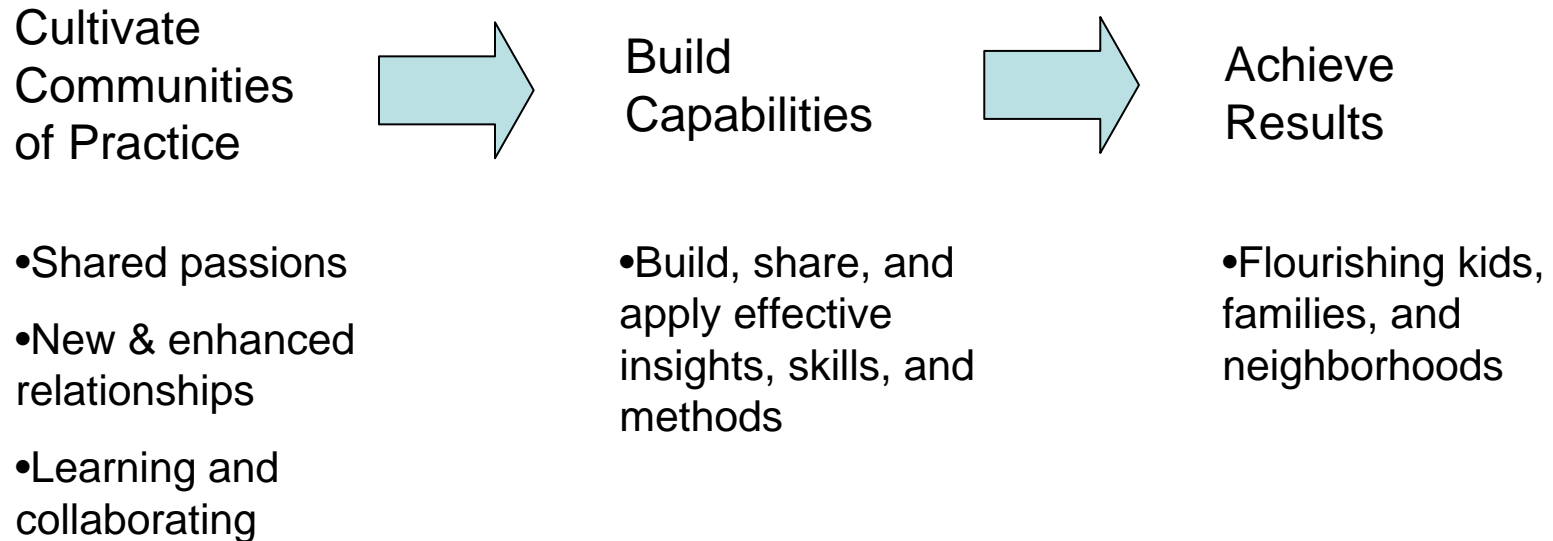
- Kids ready for school (hers and many others)
- Economic success (now hiring mothers to expand program)
- Renewing and expanding social networks—among residents and with emerging partners
- Personal development and an inspiration for others to get involved

Ecology of community learning activities for practice-development & diffusion

Mix of formal-informal, public-private, f2f-virtual, rhythm & intensity



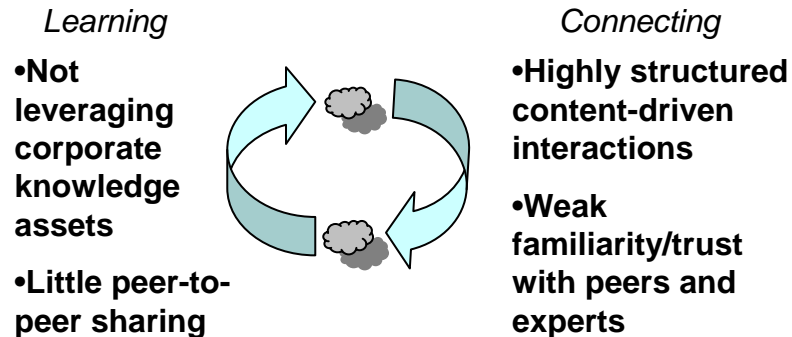
Logic Model for Communities of Practice



- Effective practices that achieve exceptional results are largely “tacit”—that is, hard to describe; mostly learned from experience
- Tacit knowledge is learned primarily through informal learning activities: conversation, story-telling, coaching, mentorship, and peer-support
- Communities of practice—groups of people with shared interests who learn together over time—provide a social context for learning and connecting

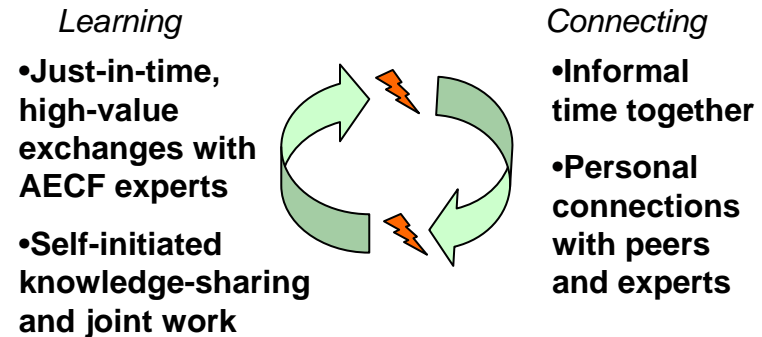
The Logic Model provides a template for stories, testimonials, and statistics that can document the benefits of communities of practice.

Learning & Connecting: How reinforce the virtuous cycle and avoid the vicious cycle?



Vicious cycle

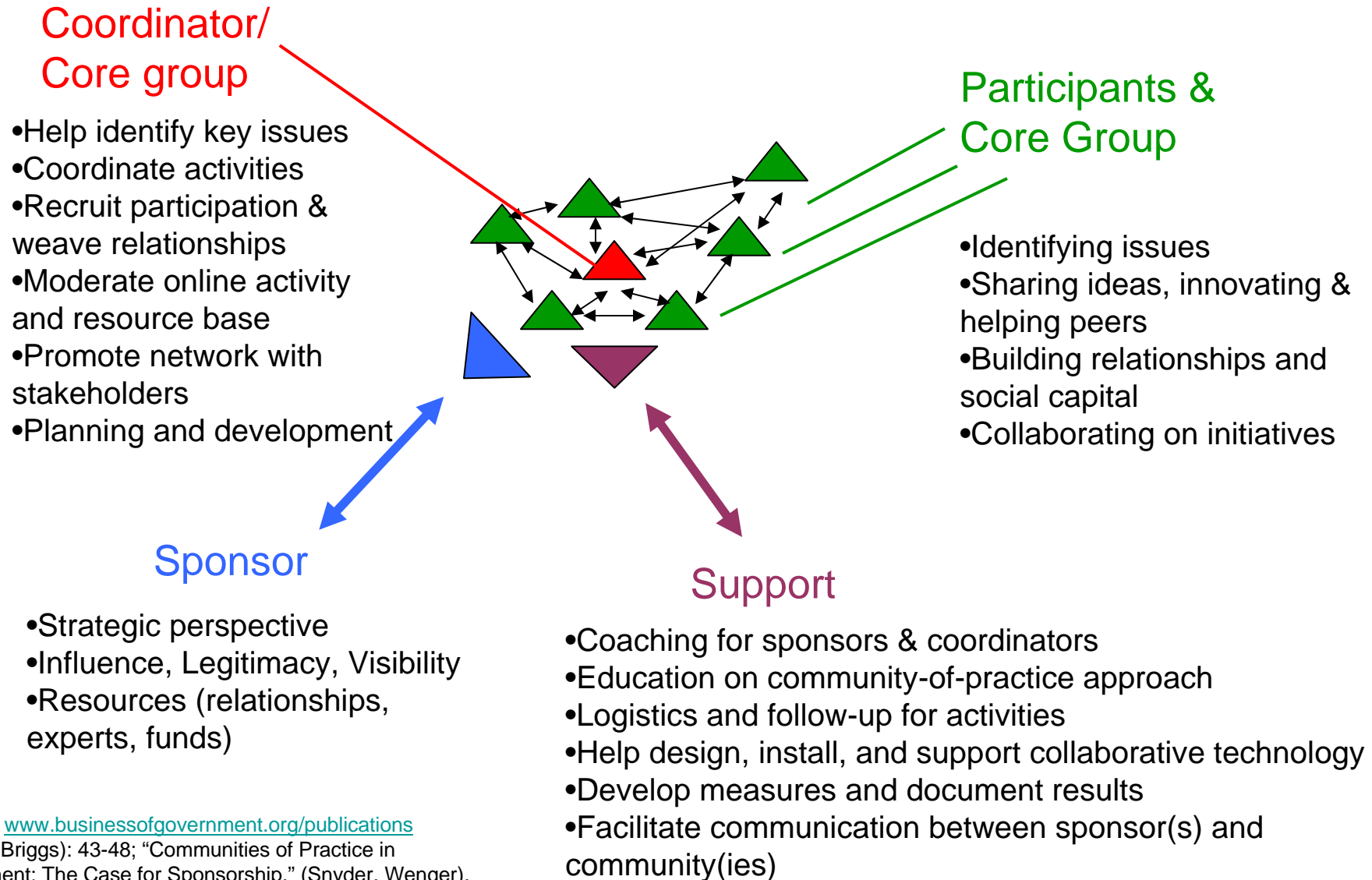
- At the conference, there were **great speakers**—including experts and people from other sites telling their stories
- I came back with a **stack of materials**
- But I **didn't get a chance to talk with my peers**—the schedule was full and I was exhausted
- One meeting, several of us met in my hotel room afterwards—but **that was the only time we've met**
- I **have to keep my head down**—unfortunately, **we don't reach out much** to each other across sites
- It's hard to get time for these **meetings**, and they're **mostly about disseminating information** anyway



Virtuous cycle

- We asked for a **small-group session to “just talk”** about what it's like to coordinate a results team; **people really opened up**; I learned a lot
- Members of our small group (mostly results team coordinators) arranged for a **quick tour of the city and dinner together**. It was interesting to see the site's neighborhoods—lots of similarities, and differences!
- We had a great time at dinner. **Several of us are now arranging a three-way visit** to compare CHAPSS initiatives—we're bringing residents and partners with us
- The **guy from Casey** who joined us at dinner has turned out to be a gold mine. He's **sent me a couple things that directly relate to what I'm doing now**. And he **gave my name to a partner in Louisville**—I was glad to help
- Several of us are inviting our **school superintendents** to come next time; **they'll get ideas and influence each other**—and this **supports our cause back home**; ours has said yes!

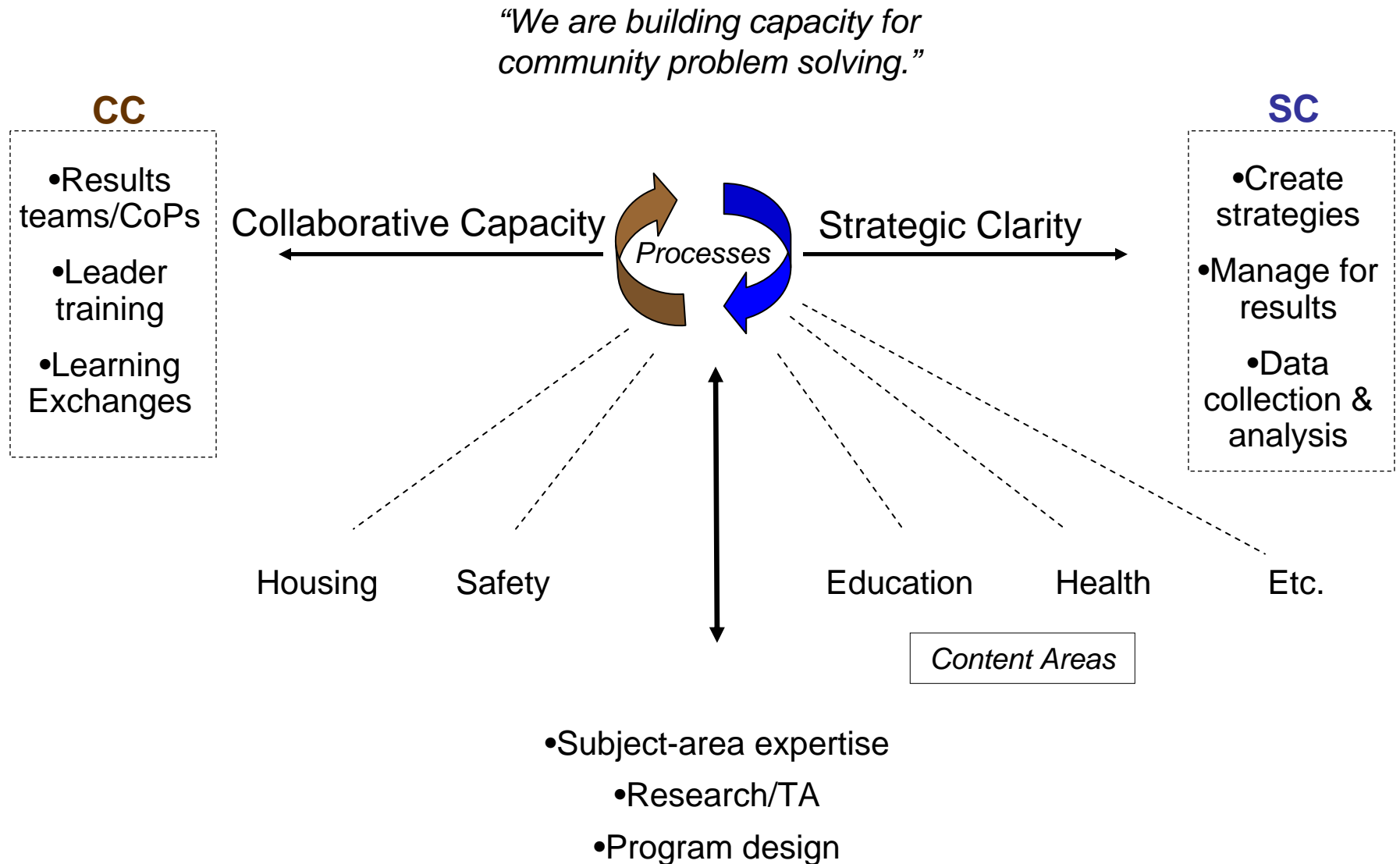
Community of practice leadership roles



Sources: www.businessofgovernment.org/publications (Snyder, Briggs): 43-48; "Communities of Practice in Government: The Case for Sponsorship," (Snyder, Wenger), 2003: 48-54 at: www.ewenger.com (see "Publications"/"Papers"); also "Cultivating Communities of Practice" (find references for terms in Index)



CCxSC as an AECF core competence in the context of an overall “architecture of expertise”



Determinants of Partnership Synergy – Lasker, et al., 2002

Resources

- Money
- Space, equipment, goods
- Skills and expertise
- Information
- Connections to people, organizations, groups
- Endorsements
- Convening power

Partner characteristics

- Heterogeneity
- Level of involvement

Relationships among partners

- Trust
- Respect
- Conflict
- Power differentials

Partnership characteristics

- Leadership
- Administration and management
- Governance
- Efficiency

External environment

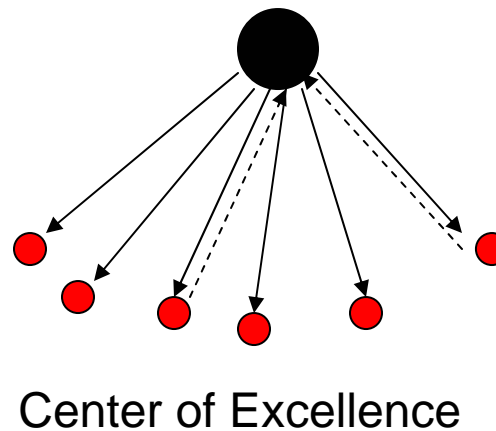
- Community characteristics
- Public and organizational policies

Note: A key factor missing here is the visibility and urgency of the problem(s) being addressed. It often takes a conflagration of some type to catalyze civic collaboration.



How we lead with ideas: Center of excellence or community of practice?

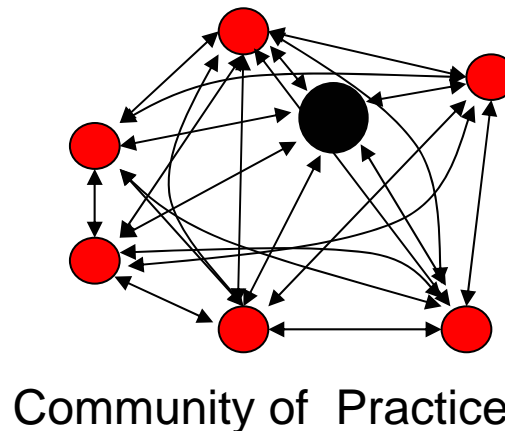
To what extent
is each model
in play today?



Risks of hub-and-spoke model

- Reduced pace and extent of learning and innovation
- Reinforces top-down dynamics and reduces local ownership for implementation
- Less sustainable if coordinator reduces involvement

Where do we
want to be?

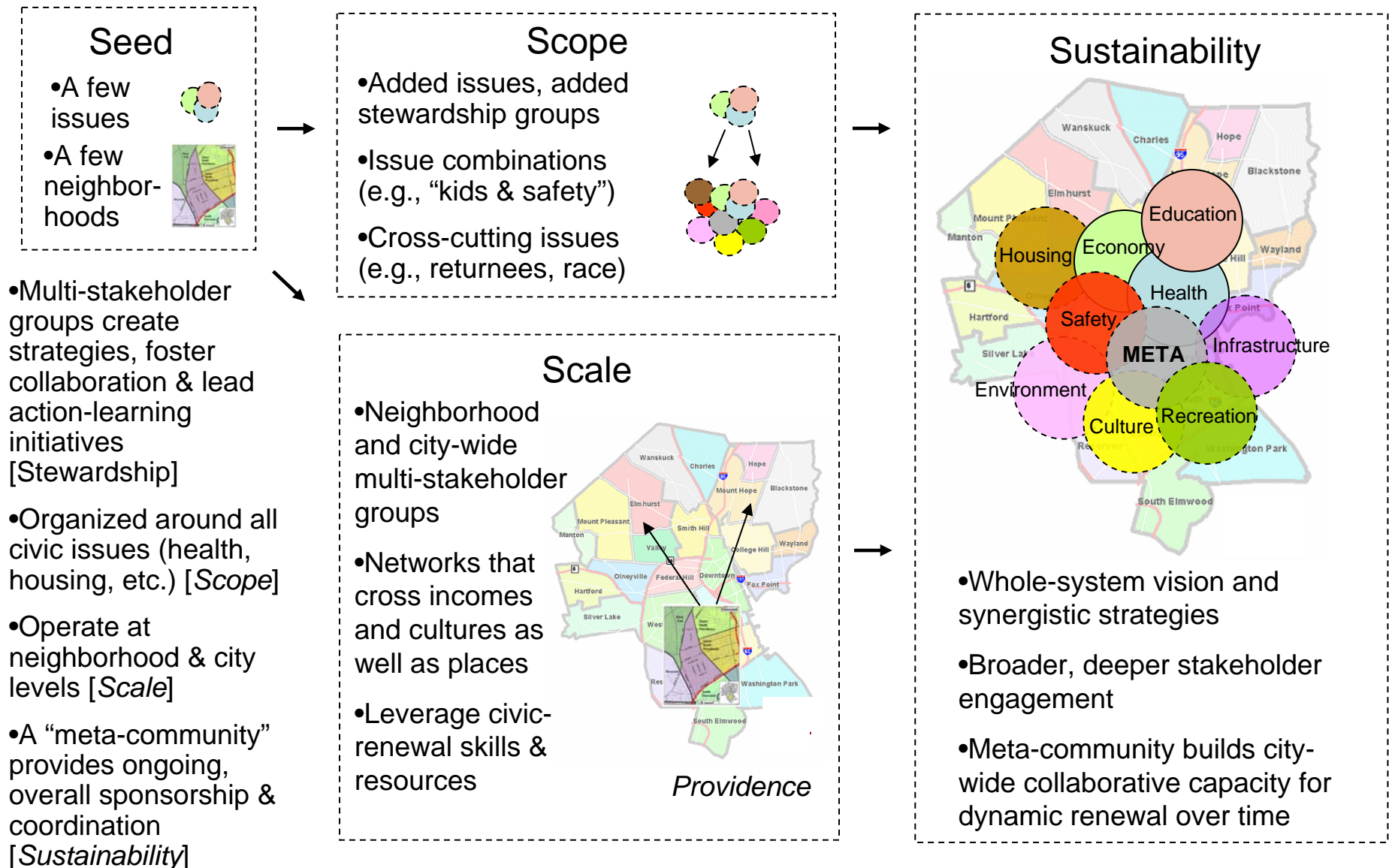


Benefits of a community-of-practice approach include:

- Faster spread of innovations and transfer of “tacit” skills and expertise
- More leverage of complementary skills and influence across players
- Increased collaboration on action and advocacy initiatives

According to Metcalf’s Law, the number of learning channels in a standard hierarchical model equals the number of nodes (for example, $n=6$), while in a mature peer-to-peer model, the number is increased exponentially ($n^2 = 36$).

Leveraging the Making Connections CCxSC approach to achieve city-wide renewal on an array of civic issues



How help CCxSC seeds spread for sustained, whole-system renewal?